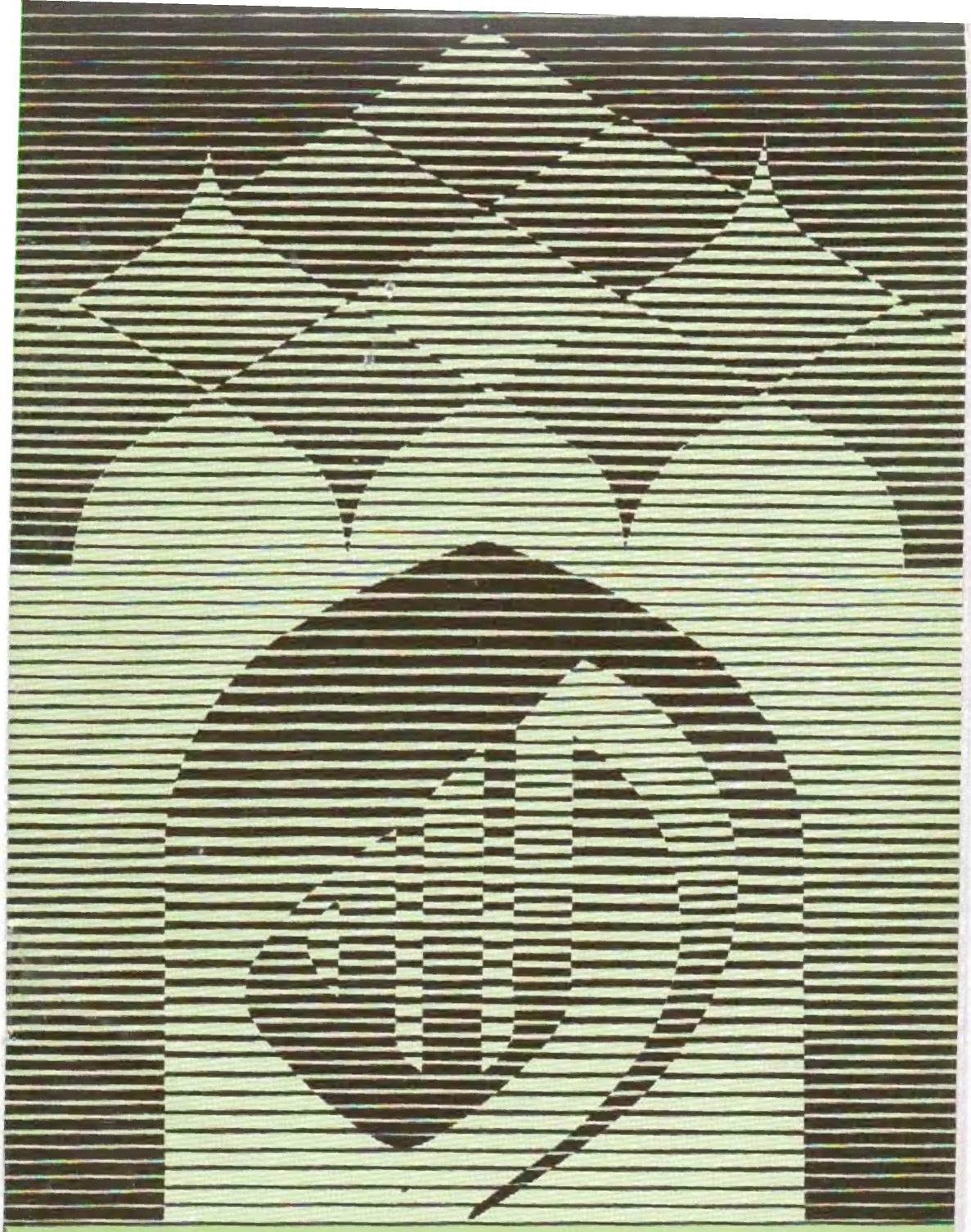

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHATE

UNIT: 22

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An Outline of the History of the Rightly Guided Caliphate

1. The Rise of the Muslim Caliphate

(A) Abù Bakr (RA) Elected Caliph

The devout Muslim Abù Bakr (RA), who had shared with the Prophet (pbuh) the hardships of life, succeeded him in the leadership of the Muslim. Although the problem of succession had not been decided by the Prophet (pbuh), his appointment of Abù Bakr (RA) to lead the Muslim in prayers implied his priority over others. Prayer is considered to be second most important of the five pillars of the Islamic faith.

Muhammad (pbuh) was inspired by the democratic spirit of the Arabs. Therefore, he thought it best to leave to them the choice of a successor. Despite the furious disagreement which occurred after the Prophet's (pbuh) death between the Refugees or Emigrants (Al-Muhàjirùn) and the Supporters of Madinah (Al-Ansàr) in the hall of the Banù Sà'ida in Medina, Abù Bakr (RA) was elected in the democratic manner of pre-Islamic tribal society (that of the patriarchal state). Certain qualifications were stipulated as necessary for electing the chiefs of their tribes including advanced age, wealth and children. In addition, Abù Bakr's (RA) religious zeal was highly appreciated by the Muslims.

Although this form of election accorded with Arab social customs, some notable Arabs, such as 'Abbàs' the Prophet's (pbuh) uncle, 'Ali (RA) the Prophet's (pbuh) cousin and son-in-law, Talha and Al-Zubayr refused homage. This foretold the division of the Arab community into Sunnites or Orthodox Muslims, i.e. those who adopt the traditional teaching of the Prophet (pbuh) (Sunna) supplementing the Qur'an, and Shi'ites, i.e. the part (shi'a) or supporters who adhered to 'Ali (RA) and believed that he was the only lawful successor (Khalifa, Caliph) of the

Prophet (pbuh) and that the first three caliphs, Abù Bakr (RA), 'Umar (RA) and 'Uthmàn, as well as the Umayyad and 'Abbàsid caliphs, were usurpers of Ali's rights.

Professor Sir Thomas Arnold has mentioned the various similarities and differences between the two political systems which prevailed in the Middle Ages, one in the East and the others in the West. Each claimed to rule by divine appointment based on the revealed Word of God. But in spite of similarities, the two systems were fundamentally different, the Holy Roman empire was consciously and deliberately a revival of a pre-Christian political institution now revived with a specific ally Christian character. Side by side with the Emperor was the Pope. As a Vicar of God upon earth, the Pope ruled over and guided the souls of all men, while it rule of the Emperor to deal with the concerns of their bodies. Unlike the Holy Roman Empire, the Caliphate was not a deliberate imitation of a pre-existing from of civilization or political organization. It was the outgrowth of conditions that were entirely unfamiliar to the Arabs, and took upon itself a character that was moulded by these conditions. The Caliphate, as a political institution, was the child of its age, and did not look upon itself as the revival of any political institution of an earlier date.

The theory of the Caliphate differed in another important respect from that of the Holy Roman Empire. The Orthodox Muslim world has never accepted the existence of any functionary corresponding to a Pope, though among the Shi'ites an exalted degree of authority has been invested in the Imam as exponent of divine truth. However, among the Sunnis, to whom the historic Caliphate belongs, divine revelation is held to have ended with the Qur'an and the Traditions, i.e. the utterances of he Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) or his intimate companions. The task of interpretation of these sources of truth was assigned to the Ulamà (the learned rather than the Caliph who, in fact, exercised none of the spiritual functions which had been practised by the Prophet (pbuh). It was the duty of the

Caliph to guard the faith which depended on two fundamental bases: the Qur'an and the Prophetic Traditions; the Muslim jurists are more than exponents of what has come in these two sources. In Islam all believers are alike in their utter subjection to the unapproachable divine majesty. Accordingly, in the Muslim world there is not that separation between the Church and the State which has been a source of much controversy in Christendom.[1]

(B) Basis of Arab Foreign Policy

Muhammad (pbuh) laid the basis of Arab foreign policy. He sent Messages to the various kings and governors inviting them to brace Islam. He also fought the Arab Ghassanid tribes, who were settled on the borders of Syria as subjects of the Byzantine Emperor, because they mocked the Prophet's (pbuh) cause, attacked has envoys and killed his friends. Before his death, he had prepared a military expedition to invade Syria under the leadership of Usàma ibn Zayd to avenge the death of Usàma's father and the Muslims who died with him.

After the death of the Prophet (pbuh), Usàma, who was only eighteen years old, thought it proper to give up the leadership of the army and leave the appointment of the new leader to the choice of the new caliph. However, Abù Bakr (RA) insisted upon carrying out the Prophet's (pbuh) desire. Therefore, he sent Usàma to the borders of Syria, thinking that this would be a military and a political tactic that would make his enemies both inside and outside Arabia perceive the strong position of the Arab government. The caliph's guess was right, and his plan prevented the hostile Arabs from acting against his government.

Some of the Prophet's (pbuh) companions, among whom was 'Umar (RA), one of those closest to the Prophet (pbuh) objected to the choice of Usàma as the head of the mission. His youth and the disturbed conditions in Arabia after the death of the Prophet (pbuh) were factors in

their objection. Abù Bakr (RA) refused to alter a resolution passed by the Prophet (pbuh).[2] With this resolution of the Prophet (pbuh) as a blessing, it is no wonder that the Muslims, including 'Umar (RA), hastened to enlist themselves under Usàma's banner in struggle for Islam. As the army started to march, Abù Bakr (RA) came to bid them farewell. He entreated them to guard the weak to safeguard peoples' lives and properties, and to respect their religious beliefs. In this way Abù Bakr (RA) legislated the morals of fighting.

The victory of Usàma thrilled the people of Medina and made up for the difficulties they had suffered in the apostacy wars. After this, Abù Bakr (RA) directed Arab energy away from internal uprisings by engaging the Arabs in foreign wars. This fulfilled the commandments of the new faith to spread it and also made him profit from the Arab's instinctive love of fighting. Abù Bakr (RA) supplied armies and sent them to various lands for the spread of Islam. The fact that he simultaneously sent armies to invade the territories of the Persia and the Byzantine empires, in spite of their power and wealth, proves his perseverance and determination.

Abù Bakr (RA) died while the vanguard of the Arab armies was threatening, Palestine, Iraq, and the kingdom of Hira. It was destined that his successor 'Umar (RA) should complete the conquests that Abù Bakr (RA) had begun and to extend the Arab kingdom until it included most of the provinces of the two old empires: the Persian and the Byzantine.

2. Establishment of Arab Rule

(A) 'Umar (RA) before his Caliphate

The second caliph, 'Umar (RA), was born in Mecca four years before the birth of Muhammad (pbuh). He was well bred and famous for his eloquence, righteousness and courage. He spent much of his youth tending his father's sheep. Then he entered commerce and frequently

travelled to Syria for trading purposes. He also acted as ambassador between the Quraysh tribe and other tribes.[3] He embraced Islam in the fifth years of the prophetic mission after having been one of its strongest antagonists. This conversion, therefore, had a great influence in spreading Islam; he would not conceal his tenets, because he knew that among the Quraysh tribe no one would dare to oppose him. "His conversion to Islam," says Ibn al-Athir,[4] "was a conquest, his migration was a victory, and his rule was a mercy."[5]

After his conversion 'Umar (RA) accompanied the Prophet (pbuh) and became one of the closest of his companions and supporters. He devoted his life to the defence of Muhammad (pbuh) and the protection of Islam. He participated in the holy wars and was consulted by the Prophet (pbuh) about many grave matters:

'Umar (RA) was responsible for setting the dispute which arose on the "Saqifa Hall" day immediately after the death of the Prophet (pbuh); he sowre allegiance to Abù Bakr (RA) and his people followed his example. This gained him the deep respect and appreciation of the new caliph who consulted him to important matters. He became a kind of minister; to him was referred the decision of cases. He was the caliph's hand in the Apostacy wars; to him is due the compilation and the writing of the Qur'an.

When Abù Bakr (RA) became ill and felt that his end was nearing, he nominated 'Umar (RA) to be successor in order to prevent disputes that might arise and divide the Muslims. In his ordinance Abù Bakr (RA) said: "In the name of God, the most merciful, the most compassionate, this is the ordinance of Abù Bakr (RA) the successor of the Prophet (pbuh), the prayer and the peace of God be upon him in his last moments in this world, in his first in the other; these moments when the unbeliever believes and the sinner fears. I have named 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) as your Caliph. If he acts justly and mercifully this is what

I know of him; if he is unmerciful and unjust, then I cannot foretell the unseen. I meant you good by this and to everyone what vicissitudes their affairs will take."[6]

When 'Umar (RA) became caliph, he stood on the pulpit and said: "The Arabs are like a stubborn camel, and it pertains to the driver which way to lead it. By the Lord of the Ka'ba, thus will I guide you in the way that you should go."[7]

(B) Organization of Tax Registers

The Islamic state tried to balance its budget and to do so established an exchequer administered by a high official who performed duties similar to those of the Minister of Finance at the present time.

According to Ibn Khaladūn,[8] the ministry (dīwān) of taxation was necessary to royal authority. Concerned with tax operations, it safeguarded the rights of the dynasty in matters of income and expenditure. It took a census of all soldiers, fixed their pay, and gave them their allowances at the proper times. In this connection recourse was subject to rules set up by tax experts and the stewards of the dynasty. All necessary details concerning income and expenditure were recorded in a book. It was the result of a good deal of accounting, mastered only by those with considerable skill in tax operations.

The second Caliph 'Umar (RA) extended the domain of Islam outside Arabia and laid the basis of an efficient administration of the Arab empire. Most of the Arab conquests occurred during his caliphate; the greater part of persia and the whole of Palestine, Syria and Egypt capitulated, and the territory of the Arab state extended at the expense of the two great empires, the Persian an the Byzantine.

As the conquests continued and the fabulous royal treasures of the vanquished were seized, the caliph 'Umar (RA) decided to let the Muslims benefit from this wealth by distributing it amongst them. In Medina, the capital of the Arab Empire, a Persian satrap (marrubān) addressed the caliph: "Commander of the Faithful! The Persian kings had something called a register (sijill) in which their total revenue and expenditure was set out precisely; the recipients of pay were arranged in such a way that could not permit any errors."

The caliph realised the importance of this procedure; he asked the satrap to describe it to him. Then he organised the registers and allocated the bounties. To each single Muslim he gave a certain grade; he assigned pensions to the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) and to his relatives until the revenue was exhausted. It is said that one man advised 'Umar (RA) to leave a reserve for emergencies that might arise, but the Caliph rebuked him saying: "A word which Satan has put on your tongue. May God preserve me from its harm! It would be a temptation to those who will come after me. I will put nothing in reserve against any emergency that might arise save obedience to God and His messenger. These are the means by which we have attained our goals."

'Umar (RA) next allocated pay according to precedence in the adoption of Islam and to assistance given to the Prophet (pbuh) in his religious wars. He appointed scribes to keep the registers and ordered them to arrange the categories and draw up rates of pay. The scribes said: "With whom shall we begin, Commander of the Faithful? It is right to put you first". But 'Umar (RA) replied: "Begin with 'Abbàs, the Prophet's (pbuh) uncle, and the Banù H'shim, the Prophet's (pbuh) family; then proceed with those next to them, and put the family of Khattab (to which 'Umar (RA) belonged) where they deserve to be put."[9]

3. The Arab Conquests

(A) The Conquest of Iraq and Persia

The Arabs thought that the conquest of Persia would be more complicated than that of the Byzantine Empire. They were, therefore, reluctant to invade it. The first Caliph Abù Bakr (RA) sent an army to the borders of Iraq under the leadership of "the sword of God," Khalid (ibn al-Walīd) who was accompanied by Muthannà (ibn Hàritha). This army conquered the Arab tribes who were settled south of the Euphrates. They also defeated the Persians and seized Hīra and Anbàr. However, the Arabs had to retreat to the borders of the desert before the huge army of the Persians led by Rustam. Conditions remained unfavourable for the Arabs until the Caliph Abù Bakr (RA) sent Khàlid to reinforce Muslims in their struggle against the Byzantines in Syria and Palestine.

When 'Umar (RA) assumed the caliphate, troubles increased in Persia. Muthannà wrote to him of Yazdagrid's ascent to the throne, in spite of his young age, and urged him to size this opportunity. 'Umar (RA) was no longer threatened by the Greeks after his victory at Ajnàdīn in 15 A.H., and he thereafter devoted all his attention to the conquest of Iraq, choosing the great Arab general, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqàs, to lead the armies.

When Sa'd headed towards Qādisiyya (15/636); considered the gate of Iraq, he met Rustam at the head of an army of 30,000 soldiers. The army of the Arabs did not exceed 7,000 or 8,000. However, Rustam and a large number of his soldiers were killed, the rest fled and their riches were seized. Sa's pursued them to Jalùlà (16 A.H), defeated them, captured a daughter of Kisrā (King of Persia), and killed a large number of the Persians.[10] As a result of the conquest of Jalùlà, many of the dihqāns, i.e. landowners, of al-Fal'īj, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, River of

the, King, and others were converted to Islam. 'Umar (RA) guaranteed their possessions and exempted them from paying the poll tax[11].

S'ad penetrated further into Iraq; Ctesiphon (Madā'in), the capital of Persia, fell into his hands after a siege of two months. Many of its spoils were taken by the Arabs, amongst which was the carpet of Yazdagrid III, the king of Persia. Yazdagrid fled to Hulwàn with all his valuables but was not able to collect his army to meet the Arabs again for four years.[12] After seizing the city of Nahàwand, the Arabs proceeded to Ahwàz and conquered it in 22 A.H., then to Ispahan which was also conquered. A treaty of peace was concluded which stipulated that the inhabitants were to pay both the poor tax and the land tax[13].

It seems that the Ispihbid, the ruler of Tabaristàn, located on the coasts of he Caspian Sea, feared the consequences of on Arab attack. He followed the example of the neighboring king of Jurjà and sued the Muslims for peace.[14]

The year 22 A.H. (641 A.D.) was marked by numerous Arab conquests in Persia. The Arabs invaded Adherbàyjàn and seized it by storm. They despatched four armies to the countries around Armenia.[15] However, the Arabs were not strongly established in these countries, which soon revolted in the reign of the third caliph, 'Uthmàn (RA), who determined to conquer them anew.

As for Yazdagrid III, the Arabs kept pursuing him, successively seizing his lands until he was forced to retreat to the far eastern frontiers. His influence was greatly reduced, and he was eventually killed at Khuràsàn in 31 A.H. (651 A.D.) in the reign of the third caliph, 'Uthmàn. The death of Yazdagrid marked the end of the Sassanian Empire and realized the Prophet's (pbuh) desire to destroy the Persian kingdom.

The Arabs enjoyed the fruits of their victories over the Persians. They added a new country to their older possessions and increased their wealth tremendously. After their acquisition of the Persian treasures, they began to live lavishly. This wealth and riches dazzled the Arabs who were accustomed to a simple and abstemious life.

As result of the conquest of Persia, many of its inhabitants adopted Islam, and the rabs were thus able to spread it further to the East.

(B) The Foundation of Basra and Kufa

The Arabs did not like to settle in Ctesiphon (Madā'in), the capital of Persian, because they were not accustomed to big towns. They preferred the open desert and its pastures for grazing their cattle. Therefore, they founded Basra in 16 A.H. and Kufa in 17 A.H. (after General Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqās).

Basra was at first village with a congregation mosque of sun-dried bricks and a roof of thatch, and a government house. The surrounding area was divided into living quarters. Each tribe had a quarter, a mosque and a cemetery. Finding that the first houses built of reeds were highly flammable, the Arabs built them with sun-dried bricks. When their wealth increased they built them with burnt bricks and stones.

Twenty years later Basra became the most important Muslim commercial centre, especially in the trade with India and China by sea, replacing Ubulla on the Arab Guilf.[16] The population consisted mainly of the tribes of Rabī'a and Mudar. Later settlers flocked to it from India, Sind and China. This growth produced new literary activity in Basra.

The Arabs, however, thought of founding another town, as they found living in Basra unhealthy due to its abundant water and swamps. Their choice fell on the left bank of the Euphrates close to the city of

Hīra. When the caliph 'Umar (RA) approved this place, Sa'd moved to Kufa (Muhrram 17 A.H., January 638 A.D.). First the soldiers encamped in tents and then built houses of reeds. As the houses were razed by fire, the caliph 'Umar (RA) ordered the new capital (Misr) to be built of sun-dried bricks. Wide streets radiated from a mosque which Sa'ad built in the centre of the town. A government house, where the exchequer was located, was built 200 feet from the centre. The mosque and the government house were built by Persian masons in the Persian style.

Basra and Kufa soon became the most important centres of learning, politics and war in the Muslim countries. Kufa became the capital of the Upper Mesopotamia and deputy governors were appointed to rule Bād, Adherbāyjān, Hamadhān, Rayy, Ispahan, Mosul and Qarqīsyā.

Because it contained his party and supporters, 'Ali (RA), the fourth caliph, abandoned Medina and took Kufa as the capital of his empire. He was also tempted by the fertility of the land, its prosperity, and its excellent location between the various parts of the Muslim Empire. He liked Kufa and described it in these words: "Kufa is the treasure of the faith, the proof of Islam, the sword and spear of God which He puts wherever He wills."[17]

(C) The Conquest of Syria

Spite and revenge filled the hearts of the Byzantines as a result of Usàm'a campaign in their country. Consequently, the Emperor Heraclius gathered a huge army which he stationed near the frontiers of the Arab Peninsula and Palestine. The caliph Abù Bakr (RA) sought recruits from all parts of the Peninsula, and his call was answered with great enthusiasm. He sent these armies north from Medina under the leadership of four Arab generals:

1 Abù 'Ubayda (ibn al-Jarràh) whose destination was Emessa (Hims), his headquarters to be al-Jàbiya.

2. 'Amr (ibn al-'As) to Palestine.

3. Ibn Abī Sufyān to Damascus.

4. Shurahbīl (ibn Hassana) to the Jordan Valley (Transjordan).

The caliph Abù Bakr (RA) ordered them to cooperate and be subordinate to Abù 'Ubayda. 'Amr was to undertake the conquest of Palestine and to supply the other armies when reinforcement were needed.[18]

While the Muslims were engaged in their conquest of the Syrian and Palestine lands of the Byzantine empire, a small force headed towards Iraq. While the Muslim victories continued in Iraq, news came from Syria that Abù 'Ubayda could not withstand the Byzantines. Abù Bakr (RA) ordered Khàlid to march until the Muslims could gather in Yardāk. Khàlid left Iraq in order to reinforce the Arab armies in Syria. He assumed Abù 'Ubayda' leadership and placed Muthannà (ibn Haritha) in command of his former army. Khàlid now marched at the head of a large army of 10,000 men to Basrà, a fortified commercial city. He captured it with the assistance of its governor, Romanus, who guided them to a subterranean way. His conversion to Islam was an important factor in affecting the surrender of the city.

When Heraclius heard of the danger, he gathered forces under the leadership of Màhān (or Bàhàn as the Arab call him), an Armenian general known for his bravery. He headed an army of 80,000. They were joined by Jabala (ibn al-Ayham), king of Ghassàn, at the head of 60,000 Christian Arabs; their forces totalled 140,000. Arab historians,

such as Tabarī and Ibn al-Athīr, state that the Muslim army did not exceed 40,000.

The Arabs met near the River Yarmùk which flows from the heights of Hùran into the Jordan south of Lake Tiberious. Thirty miles from its confluence with the Jordan, it forms a semi-circular opening in the northern end and surrounds a vast plateau suitable for garrisoning a large army. The banks of this river slope precariously. At the narrow part of the loop, a neck forms the entrance to the flat land inside.

This spot is called the Wāqāsa and is famous in Muslim campaign history. The Byzantines knew that it was protected from all sides and was naturally fortified. They marched their army toward the Arabs who then crossed the river in the north and made their headquarters near the neck. Khàlid organised the army placing Abù 'Ubayda in the centre, Amr on the right wing and Yazīd on the left wing. As the battle developed, even the woman had to participate in checking the attacks of the Byzantines who forced an Arab retreat several times.[19] The Waqùsa day resulted in victory for the Arabs, as 120,000 of the Byzantine soldiers fell according to Arab historians.[20]

While the Arabs fought the Byzantines in the Yarmùk, news arrived of the death of the Abù Bakr (RA) and of 'Umar's (RA) accession to the caliphate. The new Caliph had not forgotten Khàlid's attitude towards the pretender Malik (ibn Nuwayra). 'Umar (RA) had accused this eminent Arab general of having killed that false prophet in order to marry his wife. 'Umar (RA) dismissed Khàlid from his office as commander-in-chief of the Arab armies and appointed Abù 'Ubayda in his place. Khàlid did not rebel against the successor of the Prophet (pbuh), because he was keen on preserving the Muslim unity in the struggle against the enemy. When he read the message of the Caliph he said: "I am not the one to disobey the Commander of the Faithful," and he fought under the leadership of Abù 'Ubayda like any other Muslim soldier.[21]

When Heraclius, then at Jerusalem, learned of the Muslim victory at Yarmùk, he foresaw the danger in his present location and hastened to move to Emessa and make it the headquarters for his campaigns.

When the Muslim armies reached Damascus, 'Amr entered it through the Faràdīs Gate, Shurahbil through the Thomas Gate, Qays ibn Hubayrah through al-Faraj Gate (the Gate of Relief), Abù 'Ubayda through the Jàbiya Gate; Khàlid remained at the Eastern Gate. The Muslim siege of Damascus lasted seventy days; the fortress stronghold and its batteries and equipment were of no avail. The Muslims prevented supplies from reaching the inhabitants. As their equipment was exhausted, their enthusiasm waned, contributing to the eventual Muslim success.

Abù Ubayda and Khàlid next seized Homes, soon followed by the capture of Hamàh, Qinnisrīn, Ladhiqiyya and Aleppo. Shurahbīl and 'Amr headed towards Baysàn and beseiged the inhabitants, forcing them to use for peace. When the inhabitants of Tiberious heard of the events in Fihl and Baysàn, they concluded peace with the Muslims; and so peace in Jordan was achieved.[22]

Palestine was then governed by a Byzantine called Aretion,[23] Whom the Arabs call Artabùn. He stationed forces at Jerusalem, (Gaza—Ghazza) and Damleh and stationed himself with the greater part of his army at Ajnadine. The Muslims and the Byzantines waged a fierce battle equal in intensity to the Yarmùk; Aretion took the remnants of his forces to Jerusalem where he took refuge (15 A.H. 636 A.D.)[24]

The victory of Amr over Aretion caused Jaffa, Lidda (Lidd), Nablus, Ascalan, Gaza, Ramleh, Acre and Beirut to submit without resistance.

'Amr next headed towards Jerusalem. The Muslims besieged this city for four months; they considered its capture a religious matter rather than a purely political and military one. After Mecca and Medina, they revered Jerusalem, the centre of the holy land. The inhabitants so feared that the Muslims would destroy the Church of the Resurrection that, in order to guarantee its security, they decided to negotiate with the Commander of the Faithful, 'Umar (RA), asking the Arab general to come in person. Their patriarch, Sophronius, appeared on the walls and asked for peace on the condition that it be concluded by the Caliph. The general wrote to 'Umar (RA) who gave his consent, and moved to al-Jàbiya in the province of Damascus, where he wrote a convent to the people of Jerusalem and the provinces of Palestine. In this agreement he made the leaders of the Muslim armies in Syria and Palestine bear witness. The text has been recorded by Tabari.[25]

'Amr remained with his army in Palestine to subdue the followers of Constantine, son of Heraclius. He moved towards Caesarea where Constantine was stationed with a large army. This prince was overcome by fear when he heard of the surrender of Tiberius and of his father's escape from Antioch. He imagined that 'Amr had penetrated the walls of the city. He secretly left his palace with his family and moved to constantinople as his father had done before. When his people heard of his escape, they surrendered to 'Amr.

After these long wars byzantine authority dwindled in Syria. During the expeditions the Muslims had met with great difficulties and had suffered much from the climate. More than 25,0000 of their army had been killed in the battles at Yarkùk, Damascus, Jerusalem and Aleppo.

(D) The Conquest of Egypt:

The Romans conquered Egypt in 30 B.C. Augustus Caesar made the country an important source of grain to satisfy the needs of Rome. Taxes increased greatly during Roman rule, and additional disputes and dissensions paved the way for the Persian rule of Egypt, and the later conquest by Arabs.[26]

When the second caliph 'Umar (RA) went to Jàbiya in the province of Damascus, in 18/639 'Amr (ibn al-'As), one of the four leaders whom the first Caliph Abù Bakr (RA) had appointed for the conquest of Syria and Palestine, came to him and said: "Allow me to proceed to Egypt. It is a rich land, and if conquered will add power and aid to the Muslims." The Caliph hesitated because he feared a Muslim failure. He could not gather a large army for this expedition because of the dispersal of Muslim forces in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia. The Caliph also feared an over extension of conquests, because the Muslim rule had not yet been strongly established in the countries already conquered.

'Amr continued to recommend the plan by emphasizing the great wealth and the fertility of Egypt. He had learned its assets on several visits made for trade. He also tried to convince 'Umar (RA) that the Muslim possession of Egypt would strengthen their authority in Syria and Palestine by protecting them from the south. Continued Roman possession, on the other hand, would threaten Arab authority in Palestine.

The Caliph yielded with reluctance to the urgent representations of his general, and even stipulated that if a letter of call should reach the army before it entered Egyptian territory, it was to march back to Medina. He gave him 4,000 men to assist the mission. The letter was sent, but 'Amr contrived to cross the frontier before opening the letter, and thus achieved his purpose. The Arab general marched with his soldiers across

the sinai desert until he reached 'Arish in 18 A.H. He seized it without any resistance, due to the poorly protected fortresses.

The Arab general left Arish taking the road which emigrants, invaders, merchants, pilgrims, and tourists, have taken since ancient times. This same road had been followed by Abraham when he took his son Ismail to the Arab Peninsula, by Cambyses, the king of Persia, when he marched to conquer Egypt, and by Alexander the Great when he extended his conquests to India.

The Arab general 'Amr did not fight until he reached Pelusium (al-Faramà), a port on the Mediterranean which was considered to be the gate to Egypt. The Muslims besieged it more than a month before it surrendered in January, 640 A.D. (Muharram 1,19 A.H.). Historians have agreed that the Copts, the Christian natives of Egypt, aided the Arabs in their capture of Pelusium.

'Amr next proceeded to Bilbais (Bulbays). He passed the city of Migdol next to Pelusium in the desert near the coast of the Mediterranean, to Kantara (al-Qantara), now on the Suez Canal. When 'Amr arrived at Bilbais he found the Roman general Aretion who had fled to Egypt before the surrender of Jerusalem to the Caliph 'Umar (RA). 'Amr defeated him and seized the city after a month of continuous struggle. The daughter of Cyrus,[27] ruler of Egypt, was captured by the Muslims. The Arab general sent her to her father amidst manifestations of honour and esteem, which gained the respect of the Copts and changed their opinion of Muslims and of Muslim rule.

After the capture of Bilbans, Amur marched to Tendunias, which the Arabs later named Umm Dunayn, then to Maximus (al-Max), where a bitter fight of several weeks took place between the Muslims and the Byzantines.

When 'Amr found that the conquest was being delayed, he stopped the war and sent a request for aid to the Caliph. 'Umar (RA) sent him 4,000 men led by four close companions of the Prophet (pbuh): Al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwàn, 'Ubàdah ibn el-Sàmit, Maslama ibn Mukhallad, and al-Miqdàd ibn al-Aswad. The Caliph wrote to 'Amr saying: "I have supplied you with 4,000, among whom are four each of whom is equal to another thousand men".

When these reinforcements reached Heliopolis ('Ain Shams), 'Amr went to meet them. Therefore, the Roman leader advanced with an army of 20,000. The careful tactics of Arab general and his troops resulted in defeat for the Romans.

'Amr himself became strongly established in Tendunias and in Heliopolis, which became his head-quarters. Only the fortress of Babylon remained. In 20 A.H. he marched there and laid seige during the Nile flood. The siege lasted seven months due to the strong fortification of the city walls and the Arabs' lack of adequate equipment. A month later, after Cyrus had seen the serious intent of the Arabs and their persistence in war, he sent to 'Amr asking him for peace. When the envoys of Cyrus came to 'Amr, they were detained in the Arab camp for two days, during which time they were allowed to go and make their own observations on the life and character of the Muslims. 'Amr then dismissed them with the usual offer of 'Amr: Only one of three courses is open to you:

1. Islam with brotherhood and equality;

2. Payment of tribute and protection;

3. War till God decides between us.

These conditions aroused the apprehensions of Cyrus and he advised his people to surrender. He sent to the Muslims, asking them for

envoys to negotiate peace.[28] When Cyrus wrote the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, he was reproached. Heraclius discounted Muslim power and appealed to the Greek leaders with Cyrus who, as a result, resumed their attacks on the Muslims. But Cyrus paid no heed to Heraclius and assured 'Amr of his continued adherence to their agreements.[29] Western historians generally considered this action one of treason by Cyrus.

When the Arabs conquered Egypt, Alexandria was its capital and the second capital of the East Roman Empire (after Constantinople). It was also the most important city in the world. The Byzantines were certain that an Arab capture of the city would end Byzantine sovereignty in Egypt. Consequently, the emperor quickly dispatched his army to the city where they prepared themselves for its defence; its gates were closed and shelter taken within.

'Amr marched to Alexandria, and on the way seized Taranùt, Nikio, Sultays and Karyùn, the last in the chain of the Roman forts which extended all the way from Babylon to Alexandria.

The Roman garrison in Alexandria reached 50,000 completely equipped soldiers, while the Arab soldiers did not exceed 12,000. 'Amr and his soldiers withstood enemy raids and attacks for four months. This troubled the Caliph 'Umar (RA), and he sent a letter to 'Amr blaming him and the Muslims. After reading the Caliph's message, 'Amr transferred authority for the Greek manoeuvre to Ubada (ibn al-Sàmit) under whom Alexandria was conquered. 'Amr made the people of this city subject to the poll tax under Muslim protection and gave them the choice of leaving or remaining, a policy which the Arabs followed in most of the countries they conquered. However, 'Amr used in Egypt a policy adapted to a country won by peaceful means in order to gain the love and affection of the Egyptians.

The treaty of peace which Cyrus concluded with the Arabs may be summarized as follows:

1. That everyone subject to the poll tax would be required to pay two dīnārs per year.

2. An Armistice would prevail for eleven months.

3. The Arabs should remain in their quarters during the truce and refrain from attacking Alexandria, and that the Greek soldiers should also refrain from any hostile activities.

4. That the Muslims would not destroy the churches or interfere in the affairs of the Christians.

5. That the garrison in Alexandria should leave with property and money, and that they shall pay the pool tax for one month.

6. That the Jews should remain in Alexandria.

7. That no Greek army should try to capture Egypt.

8. That the Muslims should keep as hostages 150 Greek soldiers and 50 civilians until the terms of this treaty were executed.[30]

The surrender of Alexandria was the last important act in the conquest of Egypt. No serious resistance was encountered elsewhere, and the whole country from Eyla on the Red Sea to Cyrenaica (Barca, Barqa) on the Mediterranean, and from the first cataract of the Nile to its embouchure, became a province of the Muslim caliphate. The Arabs spread over the country during the winter of 6411 A.D., restoring order

and levying taxes, for 'Amr was not the man to keep them idle :"Go forth," he said, "now that the season is gracious: when the milk curdles, and the leaves wither and the mosquitoes multiply, come back to your tents."

(E) The Foundation of Fustat:

A new capital for Egypt, Fustat, or the Town of the Tent, was founded by General 'Amr, after the Arab conquest of Egypt in 20/641. The new capital lay about ten miles north of the remains of the ancient capital of Memphis on the site of the Roman fortress of Babylon where the Byzantine army had been garrisoned.

When 'Amr led his army against the castle of Babylon he pitched his tent on the spot where a mosque still bearing his name stands. He then proceeded to Alexandria, and when he returned he bade his soldiers build a city around his tent. Thus the first Arab Capital of Egypt was called Al-Fustat, the tent[31]. He thought that Alexandria was no longer suitable as the capital of Egypt, because the waters of the Nile between Arabia and Alexandria could prevent the Caliph from sending fresh troops to his governor if needed. As they were not a naval nation a site either on the Red Sea or in a place suitable for inland communications was preferred.

Thus the site of Fustat was chosen, as it enabled 'Amr to control the upper and the lower parts of Egypt, and because it was close to the route leading to Arabia. It gradually developed into an important town when the small town of Babylon was incorporated with it, and it exists today as Misr al-Fustat or Old Cairo.

Fustat remained the capital of Egypt until the accession of the first 'Abbàsid Caliph Saffāh in 132/750. The new 'Abbàsid governor of Egypt then abandoned the seat of his government in Fustat and established a new

official capital, al-Askar, the cantonment, on a plain slightly to the north-east. Despite the foundation of this new town, Fūstat continued as the metropolis and trade centre until the end of the Fatimid rule in 567/1171.

The Murder of 'Umar (RA):

'Umar (RA) remained caliph for ten years and six months (13-23 A.H.). He was murdered by a Persian slave called Abù Lu'lu'ah who had been brought by al-Mughīrah (ibn Shu'bah) from Iraq. As the people assembled for the morning prayer, Abù Lu'lu'ah mingled with them. When 'Umar (RA) entered the mosque, he rushed upon him and stabbed him with a sharp blade before fleeing. 'Umar (RA) was borne home. The murder of 'Umar (RA) by a persian slave indicates the disgust and dissatisfaction of the Persians with the Arabs who had conquered their country and deprived them of their independence.

4. Expansion of the Arab Empire in 'Uthmàn's Reign:

(A) 'Uthmàn (RA) before his Caliphate:

'Uthmàn (RA) was among the first few Arabs to embrace Islam through Abù Bakr (RA).

He spent much of his wealth on the cause of Islam, providing the Muslims with 950 camels, 50 mules and 1000 dirhams in the military expedition which the Prophet (pbuh) had prepared against Byzantine soldiers who had gathered at the boundaries of Palestine '9 A.H. 'Uthmàn (RA) also bought the well known Roman well for 20,000 dirhams and donated it to the Muslims. He was one of the narrators of the Prophetic traditions, and he is said to have related 150 traditions.

During the reign of the first Caliph, Abù Bakr (RA), 'Uthmàn (RA) was secretary and scribe and was consulted on important affairs of

the state. The second Caliph, 'Umar (RA), relied on his advice and later chose him as one of the six candidates for the caliphate. 'Uthmàn acquired the position by a majority of the council of these six candidates. After acquiring this majority, rivalry developed between 'Uthmàn and 'Ali (RA), or in other words, between the Banu 'Uthman (RA) and 'Ali (RA), or in other words, between the Banù Umāyyah and the Banù Hāshim clans. The Muslims were thus divided into two parties: the Umayyads and the Hāshimites or the 'Alids (RA).

(B) Expansion of Arab Conquests:

In spite of the instability of the later part of 'Uthmàn's reign, Armenia, Ifriqiyya (the present Tunisia), Cyprus and Rhodes and the remaining part of Persia, Tabaristàn and Transoxiana came under Arab domination.

The Nubians, encouraged by their initial success, continued raiding over the border and laying waste to the adjacent part of Upper Egypt. In 25/646, Ibn Abi Sarh succeeded 'Amr as governor of Egypt. The third Caliph, 'Uthmàn (RA), wrote to 'Amr saying: "The camel yields more milk now." "Yes," replied 'Amr, "but at the expense of her young." Ibn Abī Sarh led a well-equipped expedition into Nubia. He was able to penetrate as far as Dongola and laid siege to the town, bombarding it with catapults and ruining the cathedral, causing its king to reguest an armistice. Ibn Abī Sarh was only too pleased to agree, because his forces had suffered heavily. The Arab historians are in agreement that the Nubians were excellent archers, for they were given the nickname of rumat al-Hudaq (Pupil smiters). It was in regard to this battle that the poet said:

> "My eyes ne'r saw another fight like Dunqula with rushing horses loaded down with coats of mail."

The king came out to meet Ibn Abī Sarh, who gave him an honourable and courteous reception and concluded peace with him for a yearly payment (baqt) of slaves, promising him a present of grain when he complained of the dearth of grain in his country. The treaty ran as follows:

"In the name of God, this is a treaty granted by Amir 'Abd Allàh ibn Sa'd Abī Sarh to the chief of the Nubians, and to all the people of his dominions, a treaty binding on great and small among them from the frontier of Aswan to the frontier of 'Alwa. Ibn Abī Sarh ordained security and peace between them and the Muslims, their neighbours in Upper Egypt as well as all other Muslims and their tributaries. "Ye people of Nubia, Ye shall dwell in safety under the safeguard of God and his Apostle Muhammad (pbuh) the Prophet whom God bless and save. We will not attack you nor wage war on you, nor make incursions against you, so long as Ye abide by the terms settled between us and you. When Ye enter our country, it shall be but as travellers not settlers. Ye shall protect those Muslims and their allies who come into your land and travel there, until they quit it. We shall give up the slaves of Muslims who seek refuge among you, and send them back to the country of Islam; and likewise the Muslim fugitive who is at war with the Muslims, him Ye shall expel from your country to the realm of Islam; Ye shall not espouse his cause nor prevent his capture. We shall put no obstacle in the way of a Muslim, but render him aid till he quit your territory. Ye shall take care of the mosque which the Muslims have built in the outskirts of your city, and hinder none from praying there, Ye shall clear it, and light it, and honour it. Every year Ye shall pay 360 head of slaves to the leader of the Muslims, of the middle class of slaves to the leader of the Muslims, of the middle class of slaves of your country, without bodily defects, males and females, but no old men nor women nor young children. Ye shall deliver them to the governor of Aswan. No Muslim shall be bound to repulse our enemy from you or to attack him or hinder him, from Alwa to Aswan. If ye harbour a Muslim slave, or kill a Muslim or an ally, or

attempt to destroy the mosque which the Muslims have built in the outskirts of your city, or withhold any of the 360 head of slaves, then this promised peace and security will be withdrawn from you, and we shall revert to hostility, until God between us, and He is the best of Umpires. For our performance of these conditions we pledge our word, in the name of God, and our compact and faith, and belief in the name of His Apostle Muhammad (pbuh), God bless and save him. And for your performance of the same, Ye pledge yourselves by all that ye hold most sacred in your religion, by the Messiah and by the Apostles and by all whom ye revere in your creed and religion. And God is witness of these things between us and you." (31 A.H. May-June 652 A.D.).

Before this treaty, the "baqt," or annual tribute of 360 head of slave had been paid to 'Amr (ibn al-'As), together with slaves whom he declined to accept as a present but paid for in corn and provisions. This exchange continued for long time. The baqt of 360 slaves was regularly paid every year to an Egyptian at a town 5 miles from Aswan, the frontier town of Egypt, and 40 slaves in addition were exchanged for wheat, barley, lentils, cloth and horses.

The treaty concluded between ibn Abī Sarh and the King of Nubia is interesting. First, it shows that the Muslims at that time had no idea of annexation and accepted the proximity of a non-Muslim state. However, the clause stipulating the building of a mosque at Dongola and the arrangements for trading activities did lay the foundation for later Arab penetration of the country. Secondly, it remained in force for a very long time because it was a treaty of mutual toleration, and a trade agreement rather than a tribute to an overlord, for the Nubians had not been defeated. Thirdly, it laid the foundation of the slave trade which was to become such a feature of later rule — a very different thing from ordinary domestic slavery.

For a long period thereafter relations between the two countries were restricted and peaceful, except for occasional raids and the occasional withholding of the baqt tribute. The Muslim interest in the country south of Aswan was confined to the export of slaves and later to the exploitation of the many mines in the Beja country on the eastern bank of the Nile.

We also see from the treaty which refers to the chief of the Nubians and to all the people of his dominion from the frontier of Aswan to that of 'Ulwa, that the two kingdoms of Maqurra and Nubia were now united under one king.

(C) The Muslim State under 'Uthmàn

The Muslim state changed at the time of the caliph 'Uthmàn (RA). This change instigated a spirit of resistance against government policy and caused rebellion both in Medina and in the Arab provinces. This atmosphere was suitable for the propaganda of Ibn Saba' and his supporters against 'Uthmàn's (RA) policy; the spirit of revolt was encouraged by the old eminent Companion of the Prophet (pbuh), Abù Dharr (al-Ghifârī), who was esteemed for his piety and who resented the standards of the new leader.

The Muslims also were discontented with the distribution of booty as related to Ibn Sabà: "Are you not surprised at Mu'àwiya (then governor of Syria) who says: 'Riches belong to God, yet everything is God, yet everything is God's as if he wishes to conceal it from the Muslims and flot out the names of Muslims (from the lists of payment)?" Abù Dahrr was so aroused that he called on the rich to pity the poor,[32] and referred to this verse of the Qur'an: "And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God: announce unto them a most grievous penalty. On the day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in

the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. — This is the (treasure) which ye buried for yourselves: taste ye, then, the (treasures) ye buried!"[33]

'Uthmàn (RA) differed from his predecessor, 'Umar, because of his lenient policy and old age. His lax rule, as well as other undesirable traits, aroused the dissatisfaction of the Muslims, ultimately brought about his murder (35/655), and put an end to the first stage of the national conflict.

(D) Compilation and Recording of the Qur'an

In 'Uthmàn's (RA) reign the Qur'an was finally compiled and recorded. It consists of the revelations which Muhammad (pbuh) received through Gabriel from God over a period of 22 years. Muhammad (pbuh) used to recite the revelations at the time of inspiration before his followers who were present. Some of these followers assumed the task of recording these revelations upon palm leaves, leather, stones or such available rude material.

The fact that the Prophet (pbuh) neither read nor wrote implied the marvel of his revelation. Muhammad (pbuh) relied on some of his close learned companions whom he used as scribes. They ranged in number from 14 to 102. The miraculous memory of the Arabs who were fond of poetry, and the fact that there were some able to write and read, helped greatly in preserving these revelations.

These scribes and the other Muslims memorized the revelation and recited them on various occasions, especially in public services. In the last year of his life Muhammad (pbuh) advised his followers to compile and record the Qur'an. Zayd was entrusted with the task of compilation. He and some others learned the verses of the Qur'an by heart.

In one of the Muslim religious wars it is recorded that about seventy reciters of the Qur'an were killed. 'Umar expressed his fear that this might happen to other reciters and result in the loss of a great number of verses. He proposed to the first Caliph, Abù Bakr (RA), that the Qur'an be compiled by the Prophet's (pbuh) companions. The fragments were kept by the first and second Caliphs.

In the reign of 'Uthmàn (RA) it was found that the various Arab territories differed in reciting the Qur'an and that it would be possible to agree on a common method in reciting it. The Caliph ordered several copies of the Qur'an to be made and sent to the Muslim provinces for use.

'Uthman's (RA) work is a great credit to him, because his recording aimed at uniting all the Muslims in common recitation of the Qur'an in order to avoid perversion or corruption through addition or omission.

The Arab poets resisted the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh). They read the Qur'an merely in order to refute its principles and said that Muhammad (pbuh) invented the Qur'an. (add a period) The Qur'an challenged these poets to write only 10 chapters of the Qur'an and they failed to do so; the Qur'an invited these pagan poets to imitate a chapter like the Qur'an and again they failed. The Qur'an made it clear that if all humans and the Jinns gathered together to produce a book similar to the Qur'an they would fail to create one like it.

5. End of the Orthodox Caliphate:

(A) 'Ali (RA) before His Caliphate

'Ali (RA) was the Prophet's (pbuh) cousin and son-in-law. 'Ali (RA)'s father, Abù Talib, had a large family. When 'Ali was quite young there was a serious famine in Makkah, and to relieve Abù Talib's

hardship, Muhammad (pbuh) asked his other uncle, 'Abbas, to share with him the support of some of his sons. They both offered their help and secured his acceptance. It was decided that 'Abbas would provide for Ja'far and Muhammad (pbuh) would keep 'Ali (RA)[34].

'Ali (RA) was thus brought up in the house of Muhammad (pbuh) who showed him great favour and kindness. When Muhammad (pbuh) was sent on his prophetic mission, 'Ali (RA), who was thirteen years old, was the first to embrace this new faith after Muhammad's (pbuh) wife, Khadīja. Furthermore, 'Ali (RA) was the first to perform the prayer with the Prophet (pbuh) on the next day of his mission. Since his childhood 'Ali (RA) had been well known for his high virtues; he was pious, ascetic and God-fearing. He continued to share with the Prophet (pbuh) the sweetness and bitterness of life. When the Quraysh tribe heard the news of the agreement made between the Prophet (pbuh) and the people of Yathrib to migrate to their city, they plotted against Muhammad (pbuh) forcing his flight to Yathrib. 'Ali (RA) gladly carried out the Prophet's (pbuh) desire and slept in his place that night, thus risking his life for the safety of the Prophet (pbuh).

'Ali (RA) then proceeded to settle the Prophet's (pbuh) affairs in Mecca. He went with many other Muslims to Yathrib where the Prophet (pbuh) established a brotherhood between the original inhabitants of this town and those who had emigrated from Mecca. The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said to 'Ali (RA): "You are my brother in this world and in the world to come;" thus establishing brotherhood between 'Ali (RA) and himself. The Prophet's (pbuh) love for 'Ali (RA) was manifested by the latter's marriage to Mohammad's daughter, Fatima, after Abù Bakr (RA) and 'Umar (RA) had already asked her hand.

'Ali (RA) was the Prophet's (pbuh) right hand in Medina, as he had been in Makkah. He took part in the holy wars, and to him was entrusted the settling of projects which required outstanding courage and

unusual merit. It was due to 'Ali (RA) that the tribe of Handàn adopted Islam, and the inhabitants of the remaining part of the Yemen soon followed their example.

When the Prophet (pbuh) died and disagreement occurred between the refugees or emigrants (Muhàjirùn) and the original supporters in Madinah (Ansàr) on the question of a successor, 'Ali (RA) did not take part in these debates, because he was occupied with the burial.[35] When the caliphate was assumed by Abù Bakr (RA), some of the eminent Arab personalities, such as 'Ali (RA) and 'Abbas, the Prophet's (pbuh) uncle, did not swear allegiance to Abù Bakr (RA). 'Ali's (RA) followers maintained that he was the first to embrace Islam, and that his services to the faith could hardly be overestimated. They claimed that 'Ali (RA) and his sons were the only lawful successors of the Prophet (pbuh) and that Abù Bakr (RA), 'Umar (RA) and 'Uthmàn (RA) (as well as the later Umayyads and the 'Abbàsids) had deprived them of their sacred rights. They also attributed certain traditions to the Prophet (pbuh) in support of their concepts. Among these traditions were: "The members of my family are like Noah's ark. He who embarks upon it is saved, while others will perish," and "He who dies with the love of Muhammad's (pbuh) family in his heart will die the death of a martyr and a Muslim, with all the belief of the faith in his heart. And he who dies with the hatred of them in his heart will die an unbeliever, and will never smell the scent of Paradise."

However, some assert that 'Ali (RA) refrained from swearing allegiance for some time, because he was overcome with grief at the Prophet's (pbuh) death.[36] After the death of his wife, Fàtma, 'Ali (RA) swore allegiance to Abù Bakr (RA). It is said that it was due to Fàtima that 'Ali (RA) did not earlier swear allegiance, Abù Bakr (RA) having refused to give her a certain property which she claimed to be her inheritance from her father. Abù Bakr's (RA) refusal was due to the

Caliph's concept that Prophet's (pbuh) wealth was considered the property of the state.

After Abù Bakr's (RA) death 'Umar (RA) succeeded him. 'Uthmàn (RA) was then one of the six nominated by "'Umar (RA) as candidates for the Caliphate. ('Umar's (RA) son, 'Abd Allah, had a deciding vote in the nomination, but no right to be elected Caliph.) When 'Uthmàn (RA) was killed, some of the rebels, headed by Ibn Sabà, were inclined towards 'Ali (RA); who was elected by majority.

(B) Civil Wars — Ali's (RA) murder:

The new Caliph expelled 'Uthmàn's (RA) governors, because he believed that it was due to their imprudent policy that rebellions broken out. He regained the fiefs which his predecessor had granted to favourites, assigned their revenue to the state and readopted 'Umar's (RA) system of distributing annual gratuities among the Muslims.[37]

This policy aroused the hostility of those former governors and other men of high rank who had lost position and wealth. Mu'àwiya, then the governor of Syria, formed a strong party by utilizing his wealth, and refused to submit to 'Ali's (RA) orders. He urged him to avenge the death of the murdered Caliph or he would attack him with his Syrian troops.

The factions which arose among the Muslims after the Battle of the Camel did not cease. They continued between the party of the murdered Caliph, "'Uthman (RA), led by Mu'àwiya, the closest and the most influential of 'Uthmàn's (RA) relations (who were determined to avenge his death) and the leader of the house of Umayya, and the party of 'Ali (RA), the fourth Caliph and the leader of the house of Hàshim. Hostility between the two houses can be traced back to the pre-Islamic period, and the rise of Islam only made it more bitter. However, the party of

'Uthmàn (RA) under the leadership of 'Ā'isha, the Prophet's (pbuh) wife was defeated.

In her address to the Arabs who had participated in the battle of Siffin (37/657), Umm al-Khayr, an Arab woman well known for her eloquence, referred to the old hostilities which led to these dissentions. The arbitration which was brought about by the representatives of 'Ali (RA) and Mu'àwiya helped to strengthen Mu'àwiya and his party. As a result, many of 'Ali's (RA) followers deserted him and were afterwards named the Khawàrij (Outgoers or Dissenters). The Muslims were now divided into three parties:

(1) The Umyyads under the leadership of Mu'àwiya.

(2) The 'Alid's or Shī'ite, i.e. the party which supported 'Ali's (RA) cause.

(3) The Khawàrij who become the opponents of the other, parties.

After the battle of Siffin, 'Ali's (RA) position was undermined, and Egypt was lost to Mu'àwiya who had appointed 'Amr (ibn al-'As) governor of this country in appreciation for aid in wars against 'Ali (RA)[38].

'Ali (RA) had many virtues except those of a ruler: energy, decision and foresight. He was gallant warrior, a wise counsellor, an eminent jurisconsult and traditionalist, a true friend and a generous foe. He has exerted, down to the present day, a post humous influence second only to that of Muhammad (pbuh).[39]

'Ali's (RA) policy of recovering Syria from Mu'àwiya was never carried out. In 660 A.D. he concluded peace with him. Soon after, he

was killed by one the three Kàrijites at the Mosque of Kùfa. These were bent on relieving the Muslim community of 'Ali (RA), Mu'àwiya and 'Amr, because they believed that these three leaders were the source of the turbulence which then prevailed. On Ramadan 20th, 40 A.H. (660 A.D.) the Orthodox caliphate came to an end.

Al-Hasan, the eldest son of 'Ali (RA), took his father's place as Caliph for about five months. His troops were defeated by the Syrians; and, deserted by his supporters in Iraq and no longer able to maintain his authority, he abdicated.[40] The terms of the peace concluded made Mu'àwiya the absolute ruler of the Arab Empire. On Rabī' II, 41 A.H. (661 A.D.), Mu'àwiya entered the city of Kùfa which 'Ali (RA) had chosen as the seat of empire.[41] Allegiance was sworn to him in the presence of al-Hasan and al-Husayn, the sons of 'Ali (RA); the people crowded around him so much that the year 41 A.H. was called the year of the Congregation ('ām al-Jamā'a).

NOTES

1. Arnold, The Caliphate, pp. 1-3.

2. Ibn al-Athir, vol. II, p. 139.

3. Iabari, Vol. Vēp. 17.

4. Ibn al-Athīr, Used al-Ghàba (the Lions of the Wood), Vol. IV, p. 58. See also Ibn Hishàm, vol. I, pp. 364-370.

5. See my "Islam". pp. 45-46.

6. This refers to the frequent charges brought by poets against the sacredness of the Qur'an, as being a poet's work. (The Qur'an, Chapter XXVI entitled ash-Shu'ra', i.e. the poets, verse 227.)

7. Tabari, vol. IV, p. 54.

8. Muqaddima, P.249.

9. Balàdhuri Futūh al-Buldān, pp. 454-455.

10. Tabari, vol. IV, pp. 132-140.

11. Balàdhuri, Futūh al-Buldan, p. 271.

12. Blāduri, Futùh al-Buldàn. p. 271.

13. Balàdhuri, pp. 309-310.

14. Tabari, Vol. IV, p. 254.

15. Tabari Vol. IV, pp. 256-258.

16. Tabari, Vol. IV, pp. 148, 150-158.

17. Tabari, vol. V, p. 141, Yaqūt, Art. Kùfa, s.v.

18. Ibn al-Athir, vol II, p. 195.

19. Wàqidi, Futhùh al-Shùm (Conquests of Syria), vol. I, p. 165 et. seq.

20. Tabari, ol. IV, p. 35 et. seq.

21. Ibn Hajr, Al Isàba Tamyiz al-Sahàba, Vol. II, p.88.

22. Tabari, vol. IV, p. 59. Ibn al-Athir, vol. II, pp. 209-211.

23. Butler, The Arab Conquest of Egypt, p. 215.

24. Tabari, vol. IV, p. 57.

25. The Capture of Jerusalem took place in 16 A.H. or towards the end of 15 A.H. (635 A.D.). Tabari, vol. IV, pp. 158-160.

26. Mine, History of Egypt under Roman Rule, pp. 115-125.

27. Cyrus had been appointed by Heraclius to carry out in Egypt the scheme to unite Church and State on the basis of the Monothelite compromise. About the year 30 A.D. he arrived at Alexandria, which had been the capital of Egypt since 334 B.C. he acted in the double capacity of ecclesiastical and civil ruler of Egypt. The Coptic Patriarch Benjamin had fled to Upper Egypt and had taken refuge in a monastry, advising the clergy to follow his example. He was released by the Arabs in 640 A.D.

28. Ibn 'Abd al-Hakàm, Kitàb Futùh Misr, pp. 59-60. Maqrizi, Khitat, vol. II, pp. 290-293.

29. Ibn 'Abd al-Hakim, pp. 59-63, 65-67.

30. Ibn Abd al-Hakam, Futùh Misr, pp. 72-74. Balàdurl, Futùh, al-Buldàn, p. 288.

31. Maqrizi, Khitat, Vol. I, p. 296.

32. Tabari, I p. 28-29.

33. Chapter IX, 34-25.

34. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balàgha, vol III, pp. 256-258.

35. Tabari, vol. III, p. 262.

36. Nuwayri, Nihàyat al-Arab, vol. VIII, pp. 218-223, 229.

37. Dinawari, al-Akbbàr at-Tiwàl, p. 140.

38. Tabari, vol. VI, pp. 58-60.

39. Nicholson, Lit. Hist. of the Arabs, p. 191.

40. Mas'ûdi, Murùj, vol. II, p. 36.

41. Ya'qùbi, Tàrikh, vol. II p. 252.

*The above material has been adapted from Hassan Ibrahim Hassan's *Islamic History and Culture*.